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*Report to  
Memo for Record Files*

22 March 1960

CONTRIBUTION TO POWER POSITIONS PROJECT

PARTICIPATING:



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The discussion, today, was held in response to a request that we select the geographic elements of national power of the Sino-Sov Bloc in relation to that of the "Free World." The Power Positions project, from which this request stems, hopes to estimate future trends in power positions both military and non-military through 1965-70. The "Free World" is a term which needs more precise definition if our contribution to the project is to be focused directly on the problem.

Initially it was asserted that the problem of International Communism arose from its being a social-economic system which aims at control of all important power centers of the world, an objective not demonstrated to be caused by geographic factors alone. While it is not believed that geographic factors are controlling ones, they are accepted as significant in that they may determine a choice between ultimate courses of action designed to achieve the same control, Domination of the World.

Discussion was also devoted to the subject of steps that might be taken by the USSR to accomplish its intended goals and conversely to possible "Free World" steps to prevent the attainment of Communism's objectives. It was recognized that the matter of determining Sino-Sov Bloc intentions lay outside the province of this group and it was also recognized that geographic factors would have primarily a modifying effect on Sino-Sov Bloc actions, or "Free World" counteractions.

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An attempt was made to approach the problem by dividing possible courses of action of the opposed Blocs into three categories: military, para-military and non-military. It was proposed to discuss geographic factors as they affected courses of action under this breakdown. This method was not deemed to be wholly satisfactory either as it became bogged down in too many side issues.

A contributing factor in our immediate problem is that which arises in any discussion of geography. The vast number of fields touched upon by the geographer makes it extremely difficult for him to select factors which are exclusively geographic in nature. Hence it is found difficult, so far, to gather to ourselves elements which are peculiarly geographic and which are determinant.

Finally, it was decided to prepare a list of geographic factors which nominally enter into the power relationships between nations, and the comment on each one as to its relevancy in the present situation. Each member of the group is to prepare such a list and submit it for such a discussion at the next meeting. This presentation of an inventory of geographic elements would be in the nature of a basic education in the significant geographic characteristics of the areas involved. It would be presented to assist others in the selection of those factors of national power which are primarily in the "Free World" versus Sino-Sov Bloc relationship.

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